

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 PM-04 INR-07 DODE-00 NSC-05 SP-02

/043 W

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R 130907Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5046

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

CINCPAC

CINCPACFLT

S E C R E T SINGAPORE 1813

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, SN

SUBJ: SINGAPORE SUPPORT

REFS: A. SINGAPORE 1788 (NOTAL); B. SINGAPORE 1763 (NOTAL)

1. EMBASSY IS FULLY AWARE WASHINGTON AGENCIES AND CINCPAC ARE ACTIVELY CONSIDERING PROBLEM OF HOW TO MAINTAIN MILITARY OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN INDIAN OCEAN AREA PREVIOUSLY HANDLED OUT OF THAILAND. SINCE SINGAPORE HAS BEEN LEANING MORE IN OUR DIRECTION OF LATE AND HAS BEEN COOPERATIVE WITH RESPECT TO VISITS OF THE SEVENTH FLEET IT WILL BE A NATURAL TEMPTATION TO LOOK TO SINGAPORE FACILITIES TO HANDLE MANY OF THESE OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS. REFTELS PROVIDE EMBASSY POSITIVE ASSESSMENT OF GOS WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT SHORT TERM SOLUTIONS AND PROBABLE WILLINGNESS FOR LONG TERM SOLUTION OF MAC CHANNEL SUPPORT. THE LONG TERM P3 STAGING REQUIREMENTS, HOWEVER, MAY PRESENT SOME DIFFICULTY.

2. WHILE THE GOS WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY CONSIDER CONSTRUCTIVELY
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ANY REQUESTS FOR USE OF ITS FACILITIES AND MIGHT WELL GIVE A

POSITIVE RESPONSE, I BELIEVE OUR CHANCES OF OBTAINING THEIR FULL COOPERATION WITH A MINIMUM OF POLITICAL RISK WOULD BE INCREASED IF WE COULD INDICATE THAT THE FULL BRUNT WOULD NOT FALL ON SINGAPORE ALONE AND THAT THE BURDEN WOULD BE SHARED WITH AT LEAST ONE OTHER ASEAN COUNTRY. I WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST IN CONSIDERING THIS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS WE EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF ROUTING SOME OF THESE FLIGHTS THROUGH INDONESIA (POSSIBLY VIA MEDAN) AS WELL AS CONTINUING THEM FROM UTAPAO TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE (ALTHOUGH THAIS HAVE ASKED US TO LEAVE UTAPAO, RTG CONCEIVABLY MIGHT NOT BE AVERSE TO ALLOWING A FEW P3 FLIGHTS TO BE STAGED THROUGH UTAPAO). WHILE I RECOGNIZE THAT THIS MIGHT POSE SOME POLITICAL PROBLEMS FOR RTG AND GOI, I NOTE THAT WE STILL HAVE MAP PROGRAMS IN BOTH INDONESIA AND THAILAND. THEREFORE, PRESUMABLY THIS SHOULD GIVE US A CERTAIN KIND OF LEVERAGE WHICH WE DO NOT HAVE HERE.

3. FROM GOS STANDPOINT, LEAST TROUBLESOME ACTIVITY WOULD BE C-141 FLIGHTS, ESPECIALLY IF SINGAPORE MIGHT BENEFIT FINANCIALLY THROUGH COMMISSARY PURCHASES AND R&R. P3 FLIGHTS ON A STEADY BASIS (AS OPPOSED TO OCCASIONAL MISSIONS) WOULD BE MORE TROUBLESOME BUT MIGHT BE RENDERED MORE ACCEPTABLE STAGED THROUGH SINGAPORE FROM CLARK AFB IF SINGAPOREANS KNEW THAT SOME OF THESE FLIGHTS WERE ALSO BEING ROUTED THROUGH MEDAN, AND/OR UTAPAO, AND THUS INVOLVED OTHER ASEAN COUNTRIES. CONVERSELY RTG AND GOI MIGHT BE MORE FORTHCOMING WITH BASE USE IF OTHER ASEAN COUNTRIES WERE PROVIDING LIKE FACILITIES (WE THINK IT HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT GOS WOULD PERMIT A P3 SQUADRON TO BE ACTUALLY BASED IN SINGAPORE WITH THE ATTENDANT HIGH VISIBILITY OF MILITARY PERSONNEL).

4. AS STATED IN REFTELS, THE ASSIGNMENT OF SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL IN SINGAPORE IS NOT A SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENT AND IS CONSIDERED UNACCEPTABLE FROM BOTH GOS AND USG POLITICAL OUTLOOK. A REASONABLE ALTERNATIVE DOES EXIST HOWEVER, LOCKHEED (LASS) REMAINS IN SINGAPORE WITH AN EXISTING TERMINAL SERVICES CONTRACT. AS A USG CONTRACTOR LASS IS CAPABLE OF PROVIDING THROUGH CONTRACT ANY/ALL SUPPORT FOR P3 OPERATIONS WHICH MIGHT BE REQUIRED. THIS OPTION AVOIDS THE PROBLEM OF U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL. WE REALIZE THAT SOME U.S. MILITARY SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL WOULD BE REQUIRED. U.S. NAVY OFFICE SINGAPORE AND USAF DET 12 HAVE SUFFICIENT UNFILLED GOS APPROVED BILLETS

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TO ACCOMMODATE ANY REASONABLE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS PURPOSE.

4. SINGAPORE MAY BE ALREADY SOMEWHAT SUSPECT IN THE EYES OF SOME OF THE NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES OF THE REGION FOR ITS RECEPTIVITY TO SEVENTH FLEET ACTIVITY, U.S. INDIAN OCEAN POLICY, AND ITS PAST IDENTIFICATION WITH U.S. POLICY IN VIET-NAM. TO LOAD A WHOLE NEW HEAVY AND VISIBLE SET OF REQUIREMENTS ON SINGAPORE ALONE MIGHT LEAD TO OVER-IDENTIFICATION OF SINGAPORE WITH SUPPORT OF

U.S. INTERESTS. THIS COULD WORK TO USG ULTIMATE DISADVANTAGE WITHIN ASEAN, COULD JEOPARDIZE SINGAPORE'S INFLUENCE WITHIN THE NON-ALIGNED BLOC (WHICH INFLUENCE HAS OFTEN WORKED TO BENEFIT OF U.S. INTERESTS) AND MIGHT LEAD TO SOME DISAGREEMENT WITHIN THE SINGAPORE CABINET -- FOR EXAMPLE, FROM FOREIGN MINISTER RAJA-RATNAM, WHO IS VERY SENSITIVE TO SINGAPORE'S NON-ALIGNED STATUS. THESE DISADVANTAGES COULD BE LARGELY AVOIDED IF THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HANDLING OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FORMERLY CARRIED OUT FROM THAILAND COULD BE DISTRIBUTED MORE EVENLY WITHIN THE REGION.

5. I THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT WE PROCEED, WHILE CONTINUING TO SEEK GOS MAXIMUM SUPPORT FOR OUR IO EFFORTS, TO SEEK SIMILAR SUPPORT FROM GOI AND RTG. SPECIFICALLY I SUGGEST THESE POSSIBILITIES BE EXPLORED PRIOR TO ANY APPROACH TO GOS FOR THE LONG TERM P3 SUPPORT ENVISIONED BY CINCPAC. THIS DOES NOT CHANGE EMBASSY ASSESSMENT OF GOS WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE INTERIM SOLUTIONS OR THE SHORT TERM SUPPORT PREVIOUSLY ADDRESSED IN REFTELS. HOLDRIDGE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NAVAL FORCES, MILITARY BASES, OVERFLIGHT AGREEMENTS, MILITARY PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SINGAP01813
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760139-0546
From: SINGAPORE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760467/aaaaceto.tel
Line Count: 133
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 SINGAPORE 1788
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAY 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <20 SEP 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SINGAPORE SUPPORT
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, SN, XO, ID, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006